

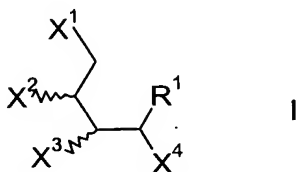
## IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-13 (Canceled).

Claim 14 (New): A process for removing horny substances from animal hides, comprising:

treating an animal hide with an aqueous liquor for removing horny substances from said animal hide, wherein said aqueous liquor comprises from 0.05 to 5% by weight, based on the salted weight of said animal hide, of one or more compounds of the following formula I:



or a corresponding alkali metal or alkaline earth metal or ammonium or phosphonium salts thereof, the variables being defined as follows:

$\text{R}^1$  is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen and  $\text{C}_1$ - $\text{C}_{12}$ -alkyl, unsubstituted or substituted by one or more S-H or O-H groups;

$\text{X}^1$  to  $\text{X}^4$  are identical or different and are selected from the group consisting of hydrogen,  $\text{C}_1$ - $\text{C}_4$ -alkyl, O-H, S-H and  $\text{N-HR}^2$ ;

$\text{R}^2$  is hydrogen or  $\text{C}_1$ - $\text{C}_{12}$ -alkyl or a  $\text{C}_1$ - $\text{C}_4$ -alkyl-C=O group;

at least one of the radicals  $\text{X}^1$  to  $\text{X}^4$  being S-H;

and, if  $\text{R}^1$  contains neither O-H nor S-H, at least one further radical from among  $\text{X}^1$  to  $\text{X}^4$  is selected from the group consisting of S-H, OH and  $\text{NH-R}^2$ ;

and further comprising at least one compound which catalyzes a hydrolysis of peptide bonds.

Claim 15 (New): The process as claimed in claim 14, wherein said at least one compound which catalyzes said hydrolysis of peptide bonds is an organic compound.

Claim 16 (New): The process as claimed in claim 14, wherein said at least one compound which catalyzes said hydrolysis of peptide bonds is an enzyme.

Claim 17 (New): The process as claimed in claim 14, wherein said enzyme is a protease or a peptidase.

Claim 18 (New): The process as claimed in claim 14, wherein said at least one compound which catalyzes said hydrolysis of peptide bonds has Löhlein and Volhard activity from 500 to 2,000,000 LVU/kg, based on the salted weight of said animal hide.

Claim 19 (New): The process as claimed in claim 14, wherein  $R^1$  is H,  $X^1$  and  $X^4$  are S-H, and  $X^2$  and  $X^3$  are O-H.

Claim 20 (New): The process as claimed in claim 14, wherein the amount of said at least one compound which catalyzes said hydrolysis of peptide bonds is chosen to be a factor of at least 10 smaller than the amount of said one or more compounds of formula I.

Claim 21 (New): The process as claimed in claim 14, wherein said process is carried out in the presence of urea.

Claim 22 (New): A pelt produced by the process as claimed in claim 14.

Claim 23 (New): A residual liquor obtained by the process as claimed in claim 14,  
comprising melanin and degradation products of melanin.

Claim 24 (New): A process for obtaining the residual liquor as claimed in claim 23,  
wherein said liquor is separated from lime and then neutralized with acid and proteins and  
then separated off.

Claim 25 (New): A process for soaking raw hides comprising soaking a raw hide  
with said neutralized residual liquor as claimed in claim 24.